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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving sight word recognition and the ability to improve reading skills. The targeted population consists of a kindergarten class and a primary self-contained special education class. The schools are located in a large metropolitan city. The problem of poor sight-word recognition was documented with student surveys, behavioral checklists, and pretests and posttests of basic sight words. Analysis of probable cause indicated that there were poor sight-word recognition skills among elementary students. This negatively affected students' reading skills. Review of the research indicated that students were not reading sight words in context or in isolation. A review of the solution strategies suggested by other researchers, combined with an analysis of the problem settings, resulted in the development of sight-word instruction. The program included hands on activities, small group tutoring, literature-based instruction, and repeated readings of predictable text. Students showed a marked improvement in reading skills. (Contains 18 references and 2 tables of data. Appendixes contain checklists, survey instruments, word lists, and sight-word books.) (Author/RS)

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IMPROVING STUDENT READING SKILLS THROUGH SIGHT WORD INSTRUCTION

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Analysis of probable cause indicated that there were poor sight word recognition skills among elementary students. This negatively affected students' reading skills. Review of the research indicated that students were not reading sight words in context or in isolation.

A review of the solution strategies suggested by other researchers, combined with an analysis of the problem settings, resulted in the development of sight word instruction. The program included hands on activities, small group tutoring, literature based instruction, and repeated readings of predictable text.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted kindergarten and self-contained primary special education classrooms exhibit difficulty reading high-frequency sight words, which interferes with reading skills. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes reading assessments, anecdotal records, and student/parent pre and post surveys of reading habits and interests.

Site A — The Local Setting

The site A target school is part of a large urban school district. Site A has a very large student population. Currently, there are 1,413 students enrolled in the kindergarten-8th grade school. The population is rather diverse with 47.6% African American, 43% Hispanic, 6.7% white, and 2.8% Asian. Ninety four point two percent of the students at Site A are from low-income families. Site A boasts a high daily attendance rate of 94.3% with only 3% of students being chronically truant. There are 76 teachers at Site A.Within the district, teachers have an average of 14.8 years of experience; 44.4% of teachers currently hold a master's degree. The targeted classroom at site A is a cross categorical self-contained special education classroom, which means the students have a variety of disabilities such as Learning Disabilities, Autism, and Mild to Moderate Cognitive Disabilities. All of the students at site A are between on and three years behind grade level in reading skills.

The school is run by a principal and two assistant principals. The population has outgrown the school building as it is now housed in the main school building, four mobile trailers and two

buildings leased from a local catholic church. The district has a community connection by the means of the Local School Council. This committee is made up of community members who are over 18 years of age. These members make important decisions for the school such as the hiring and firing of a principal and approving the school budget and school improvement plan.

Site A — The Surrounding Community

Site A is located in a community on the northeastern side of a large metropolitan city. In 1998, the community had a population of 55,136. This is a very diverse mix of people unlike many of the more segregated neighborhoods of the city. The 1998 median family income was $29,884, and the median home value was $137,202. This area had one of the highest percentages of rentals in the large metropolitan city with 80% of the inhabitants renting their homes. This leads to a 35% mobility rate for students at site A. This is one of the oldest official neighborhoods in the urban setting. It was originally a predominately white area, but in the late 1970's many of the white families moved to the suburbs and population became very diverse.

Site B — The Local Setting

Site B is located in a very large urban enviornment with a current student population of 924. Racial-ethnic population at the site is predominantly African American with 91.6% of the students in that category. 7.3% of the total population is Hispanic and the remaining 1.2% of the population is Caucasion. 93.6% of the students that attend site B are considered low-income and 2.5% are labled as limited-English-proficient. Though there were 49 chronic truants reported, the attendance rate for site B is 91.7%. The average length of experience is 14.8 years in the district in which site B is located. Forty four point four percent of the teachers in the district have earned master's degrees. The kindergarten through eighth grade school is lead by a principal and two

assistant principals. There are forty teachers on staff at site B. According to the 1997-1998 Iowa Test of Basic Skills, 20.1% of the students are reading on or above grade level.

Site B The Surrounding Community

Site B is located in a neighborhood in a large urban city. The population of the neighborhood that encompasses site B is 110,375. The median home value in this neighborhood is $86,751 and the median family income is $30,882. Neighborhood leaders claim there have been many improvements in the areas of crime and drugs over the last five years. Last year the library was renovated and expanded. The city recently completed resurfacing 75 percent of the communities' streets and started removing bulk garbage that had littered the neighborhood's alley for years.

National Context of the Problem

There is an ongoing debate over which method of teaching reading is the most effective. Several philosophies have been mainstreamed in recent years including phonics, basal instruction, and whole language. While there are strengths to several of the current philosophies, students are still struggling to attain basic reading skills. Students must be able to identify high-frequency words to be successful readers. There is a large gap between students who have sight word proficiency and students who have not yet mastered this skill. As the years go on, the gap becomes wider. "Stanovich has explained these differences between skilled and unskilled readers as "the Matthew Effect," that is, "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" (Allen, 1998, p255). Juel parallels Stanovich's research by stating that "the probability that a child would remain a poor reader at the end of fourth grade if the child was a poor reader at the end of first grade was .88" (Allen,1998,p255). Teachers are faced with choosing the most effective reading instruction approach for their student population. Educators' philosophies on reading instruction

have resembled a revolving door in relation to the frequency in their changes of direction. There are many effective reading strategies.

Sight word recognition has not been a highlighted skill in recent years. However, "a large and stable sight vocabulary continues to be the hallmark of a successful reader" (Johnston,1998,p666). A sight word vocabulary improves reading ability. When words are quickly recognized by sight, meaning is not lost and comprehension improves.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of student difficulty in reading, a behavioral checklist consisting of reading behaviors, pretest and posttest reading inventory, and a pre assessment and post assessment of high frequency site words were noted. The behavioral checklist consisting of reading behavior was conducted in a small group setting by the classroom teacher. The pre and post reading interest inventory was a teacher directed, whole class activity. The pre assessment and post assessment of high frequency site words was a one on one assessment.

Of the nine students in the class at site A, 5 were involved in this process over the eight week time period. Of the 30 students in the class at site B, 10 were involved in this process over the six week time period. A summary of sight words identified by students at site A and site B is presented in table one.

Table 1

Word Identification by Students in Targeted Groups at Site A and Site B

Word in Isolation	Site A Pretest	Site B Pretest
a	3	7
and	1	0
big	2	1
can	2	0
for	2	0
go	3	2
I	3	7
in	0	1
is	0	2
it	0	0
jump	1	0
look	4	0
me	3	1
play	0	0
run	2	0
see	2	0
the	2	1
we	1	0
you	2	0
my	0	0

Of the 20 words tested, targeted students at Site A were able to identify 33 percent of the chosen words in isolation. The students at Site B were able to identify 10 percent of the chosen words in isolation.

Probable Causes

Site-Based

There are several probable causes common to both sites. Both site A and site B schools are located in low income, low employment, high crime areas. These factors lead to other causes

such as low parental involvement, low parental educational levels and a high rate of mobility among families. In addition, pre-kindergarten enrollment is low at both sites.

Site A has additional probable causes. The student population at site A has various special needs. Three of the students have learning disabilities. This means that the students have average intelligence but a significant discrepancy between their ability and achievement. The remaining students are classified as educateable mentally handicapped, which means that the students have below average intelligence and achievement. Two of the targeted students also receive speech and language services.

Site B consists of students who have had no previous experience in a school setting. None of the targeted students in the targeted class in site B have had a pre kindergarten experience. Therefore, kindergarten is the first school exposure for the students at site B. As stated in Chapter One, 93.6% of the students at this site are considered low-income and receive welfare assistance. In addition, the parents are less equipped to provide experiences with literature because of their own low educational level.

Literature-Based

The literature suggests several probable causes for the targeted students' difficulty with reading skills. Both site A and site B are located in low income areas of a large metropolitan city. Heath (as cited in Sinatra, 1992) states that "children from such homes are generally read to less often" (1992). This lack of exposure to reading and print means that the students are entering school less prepared for reading instruction.

Additionally, lack of experience with letters negatively effects the students ability to read. "Children who enter school knowing letters are much further along in learning the system than children who have not yet learned letters" (Scott and Ehri, 1995). The literature is concurrent with the situations at both site A and site B. This occurs because of a lack of parental involvement and because of a lack of student abilities evidenced in the special needs classroom of site A.

Furthermore, handicapped children often exhibit attention deficits. The students, "may have difficulty attending to school-related tasks: (Rudolph, Wood, and Wood, 1990). This research is relevant because the targeted student at site A have handicapping conditions which interfere with their ability to remain focused during instructional time.

The researchers at site A and site B as well as the literature suggest several probable causes for difficulty using high frequency site words. They are low income levels, various special needs, lack of classroom experiences, lack of exposure to literature and print, lack of letter recognition, and difficulty attending to school related tasks. Fortunately, there are solutions to this problem.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

In the opinion of Simmons, (1992) a lack of sight word vocabulary in beginning readers can contribute to a decrease in comprehension and motivation. Additionally, sight word vocabulary can assist young readers with finding a purpose for reading. Reading can become slow and discouraging without a knowledge of high frequency sight words.

One school of thought believes that if children can read words quickly and easily, their reading comprehension will improve dramatically. (Tan & Nicholson, 1997) While this may not be a unanimous principle, teaching sight words is a process that has been utilized for many years. Ehri (as cited in Ehri 1995) found that, "sight word reading refers not to a method of teaching reading but to the process of reading words by accessing them in memory. (Ehri, 1995, p. 116)

Sight words are taught in numerous ways. Cunningham (1995) notes that flash cards, worksheets, writing words in sentences, and "word walls" help focus children's attention on the printed form of words in isolation. The three activities have been used in classrooms for many years; however, "word walls" are a relatively new concept. Once children can successfully read a word, it becomes part of their sight word vocabulary and is added to a wall displaying the group's sight words. According to Johnston (1998), "The focus of any reading program should be upon finding meaning in delightful stories, but children will not be able to enjoy reading and construct meaning unless they are able to read words effortlessly." (p. 674)

Another way to teach beginning readers sight words is by the use of a multisensory approach. There has been a small amount of research on the importance of a multisensory approach having an effect on the retention of written words. Of the research done, some of the researchers have found success, while others believe such approaches as tracing letters in a word does not improve retention (Kurywcxak, 1997)

(As cited in Kurywczak 1997) Kirk developed the VAKT (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) approach to learning words in isolation. This visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile (VAKT) approach was also used by Fernald (as cited in Kurywczak 1997). . Though the actual development of the approach came from Kirk, VAKT is often discussed as the "Fernald Method". The steps of this process involve seeing the word, saying it, tracing it with a finger and writing it without looking at the word. The process repeats until mastery occurs and the child can read and write the word in isolation. The VAKT approach includes whole word learning with no phonics instruction.

In the opinion of Fernald (as icted in Kurywczak, 1997), the shape and features of the word will be recognized by the child when word tracing occurs. VAKT was developed to assist children who could not learn through normal reading methods, (Kurywczak, 1997). Myers indicates that some educators have had success with the VAKT process while other found little or no improvement (as cited in Kuryczak 1997).

Upon examination of the literature, other variations of the VAKT were discovered. Gillingham and Stillman, (as cited in Kurywczak 1997), altered the VAKT method of instruction by including sound blending as a part of the process. Each letter sound is taught in isolation using a multisensory and tracing approach. The Gillingham Method (as sited in Kurywczak 1997) involves the following steps:

1. One letter on a drill card is shown to the student as the teacher says the letter name. The letter name is then repeated by the student. The teacher then says the letter's sound, and the student repeats the sound.

2. Without using a drill card the teacher makes the sound represented by the letter and the student must name the letter.

3. The teacher writes the letter and explains its form. The students must then trace of the l letter, copy it, and write it from memory. Last, the teacher makes the sound of the letter and the student writes the letter.

Roberts and Coleman (as cited in Kurywczak 1997) found that struggling readers learned new words when the instructional methods included tactile strategies. In the study, the struggling readers that learned new words with tracing strategies had a higher retention rate then that of readers that learned new words through the more wildly used approaches of visual and auditory learning (Kurywczak, 1997)

Pullman suggests retention of sight word is much greater when a tracing method of instruction is used (as cited in Kurywczak 1997), tactile (tracing) and multisensory methods of instruction proved to be an excellent tool for use in vocabulary development and sight word retention.

After conducting research, Ehri (1995) stated that there are four phases a reader progresses through. The first phase is known as the pre-alaphabetic phase. During this phase, "beginners remember how to read words by forming connections between selected visual attributes of words and their pronunciations or meanings and storing these associations in memory." (p. 118) Gough, Juel, and Roper/Schneider (as cited in Ehri 1995) note that the students may recognize characteristics such as the two round eyes in 'look' or the tail dangling at

the end of 'dog'. Ehri (1995) further states that letter-sound relations do not play a part in these connections. Johnston (1998) concurs with Ehri's research by stating the following:

> These emergent readers rely upon non phonetic graphic cues as a guide to word recognition. They might recognize the name of their favorite fast food restaurant on a cup emblazoned with a familiar print style or logo but would not be able to recognize that word somewhere else." (p. 667)

According to Ehri (1995), the second phase is known as the partial-alphabetic because "beginners remember how to read sight words by forming partial alphabetic connections between only some of the letters in the written words and sounds detected in their pronunciations," (p. 119) Johnston (1998) goes on to say that readers in this phase might confuse two words with the same initial letter since initial letters are often used as cues for recognition of words. Although the alphabet is use, "The reason why the connections formed are partial rather than complete is that the readers lack full knowledge of the spelling system. (Ehri, 1995, p. 119)

The full alphabetic phase is the third phase according to Ehri (1995). These readers are able to decode previously unfamiliar words. Although these readers are able to decode words, they still use sight word reading for words that they have already mastered. In Reitsma's study (as cited in Ehri 1995) it was found that "four practice trials may be sufficient for readers to retain information about sight words in memory." (p. 120) Ehri found that sight word reading is a much faster process than decoding. In a study by Ehri and Wilce (as cited in Ehri 1995) it was shown that "good readers were able to read the sight words as rapidly as they could name single digits, indicating that the words were read as single unified wholes rather than as letters identified sequentially." (p. 120-121)

The final phase is the consolidated alphabetic phase because, "as fully connected spellings of more and more words are retained in memory, letter patterns that recur across different words become consolidated." (p. 121) These letter patterns have now been committed to memory and will aid in reading new words. Ehri explains that once a reader has learned the letter pattern -est, they are able to read many new words such as nest, pest, crest, test, rest, and west. This phase occurs primarily in older readers. A study by Juel (as cited in Ehri 1995) "showed that knowledge of letter patterns enables more mature readers to read familiar words faster." (p.122) Juel found that 5th graders were able to read words with common spelling patterns more quickly than words without common spelling patterns. However, second graders tried to decode words and common spelling patterns did not influence their reading speed.

Ehri (1995) notes, "A major task for researchers has been to explain how beginners acquire the ability to recognize sight words rapidly and automatically." (p. 116) Nicholson (1998) suggests that flash cards can help with learning high-frequency words which will increase overall reading abilities. He further states that, "Flash cards can foster automaticity by helping to read words accurately and quickly." (p. 188) The goal is to have students reading stories independently and recognizing many words will aid in this task. (Nicholson, 1998) Ehri agrees by stating that, although "other means of reading words are available to readers, sight word reading is invoked the most because this process is fast and automatic." (p. 116)

Another opinion on teaching sight words comes from Bridge, Winograd, and Haley (as cited in Johnston, 1998). They state that "word learning is assumed to happen as children read and reread the text. (p. 668) However, Johnston notes that there is limited evidence to support this idea. Taylor, Hanon, Justice-Swanson, and Watts found that repeated reading has been found to be an effective way to build word recognition rate, accuracy, and fluency as well as to increase

reading comprehension. Samuels (1997) explains that repeated readings are important because a student is given the opportunity to master material before moving on to something new. He goes on to note that the method of repeated reading is useful for students with learning difficulties as well as for the average learner. This is relevant because classrooms are made up of a very diverse population of students, and this is a method that has been shown to work with a variety of learning styles. Teachers are able to use this method to reach the wide range of ability levels in their classrooms. In 1995, Ehri agreed with the importance of using repeated reading by reporting that reading a word several times leads to that word becoming a sight word. Samuels (1997) states:

> Comprehension may be poor with the first reading of the text, but with each additional reading, the student is better able to comprehend because the decoding barrier to comprehension is gradually overcome. As less attention is required for decoding, more attention becomes available for comprehension. Thus rereading both builds fluency and enhances comprehension. (p. 378)

Saccardi (1996) found that if emerging readers find success early on, they will be more likely to read throughout their lives. For this reason, children need predictable stories to promote successful experiences. Johnston (1998) states that, "Predictable reading materials provide a rich and meaningful context that supports beginning reader's efforts no matter their level of word knowledge." (p. 672) Furthermore, Sinatra (1992) suggests that repeated readings used with retellings will help poor readers predict story vocabulary. Predicting story vocabulary will enable the reader to use context clues to identify words that they encounter. When they use their sight word vocabulary in conjunction with context clues, the reader will be more successful.

The Reading Recovery one on one teaching model has been found to be successful be several authors for the reading instruction of low income beginning readers. In 1994 Pinelle reported, "Early reading intervention programs, the most notable of which is Reading Recovery which focuses on acceleration students' learning to prevent failure as opposed to remediating problems as they occur, have been found to be very effective (Heibery and Taylor, 1994). Experts agree that students greatly benefit from the one on one teaching strategy used be Reading Recovery teaching. In addition, researchers agree that early intervention must take place at an early age in order for such programs to be successful. Shanahan and Barr, 1995 reported the following in Taylor, Hanson, Justice-Swanson and Watts, "Early intervention programs have been widely incorporated into schools around the United States (1997).

Experts conclude that low income students are often in need of early intervention assistance in the area of beginning reading. Mullis,Campbell and Farstruys state the following in Taylor, Hanson, Jutice-Swanson and Watts, "We know that students who are struggling in reading come disproportionately from families of poverty." In addition, the experts agree that extra assistance in beginning reading is essential for these students to heighten success and diminish failure. In 1994 Pikulski reported "The rapid influx of programs as well as numerous recently published books and articles focusing on early reading intervention suggest that getting children off to a good start in reading is essential and that early intervention is a key factor in making this possible."

In addition to one on one reading instruction for beginning readers, the experts also suggest the incorporation of a literature based model. Sinatra (1992) states that using children's literature is a natural way to motivate poor readers to learn both sight and expanding mean vocabularies. Mallone and Berglund (1984) agree with Sinatras's views of the incorporation of a

literature based model. They conclude that teaching pre reading skills through literature is an important factor in the development of pre reading skills in kindergarten and special education children. They also agree that students understanding that print has meaning as a result of a literature based model of reading instruction.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result on increased instructional emphasis on sight word instruction, during the period of August 1999 to January, 2000, the special education and kindergarten students from the targeted classes will increase their sight word recognition, as measured by sight word post tests, behavioral checklists and student surveys.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Sight word list will be created.
2. Kinetic activities will be developed to improve sight word recognition.
3. Teacher created books will be constructed.

Project Action Plan

Week 1:

Day 1
Student survey of feelings about reading

Day 2
Individual pretest of twenty sight words

Day 3
Individual checklist for reading behaviors

Day 4
Environmental Print Pre-Reading Activity

Day 5
"I Can Read" envelope of samples of environmental print to share with a partner

Week 2

Day 1

Introduce list A of targeted sight words with tracing activity

Day 2

Bean activity with word cards: gluing beans on cards of words to trace letters

Day 3

Magnet letters on cookie sheet activity

Day 4

"Find the Word" activity: finding targeted word in text

Day 5

Flash card Activity with targeted word list.

Week 3

Day 1

Introduce list B of targeted sight words with tracing activity

Day 2

Bean activity with word cards: gluing beans on cards of words to trace letters

Day 3

Magnet letters on cookie sheet activity

Day 4

"Find the Word" activity: finding targeted word in text

Day 5

Flash card Activity with targeted word list.

Week 4

Day 1

Introduce list C of targeted sight words with tracing activity

Day 2

Bean activity with word cards: gluing beans on cards of words to trace letters

Day 3

Magnet letters on cookie sheet activity

Day 4

"Find the Word" activity: finding targeted word in text

Day 5

Flash card Activity with targeted word list.

Week 6

Day 1

Introduce list D of targeted sight words with tracing activity

Day 2

Bean activity with word cards: gluing beans on cards of words to trace letters

Day 3

Magnet letters on cookie sheet activity

Day 4

"Find the Word" activity: finding targeted word in text

Day 5

Flash card Activity with targeted word list.

Week 7

Day 1

Teacher-created predictable reading book activity with list A words.

Day 2

Teacher-created predictable reading book activity with list B words

Day 3

Teacher-created predictable reading book activity with list C words

Day 4

Teacher-created predictable reading book activity with list D words

Day 5

Teacher-created predictable reading book activity with various sight words

Week 8

Day 1

Students will choose favorite predictable reading book to read with a partner

Day 2

Students will read favorite book to class

Day 3

Student survey of feelings about reading

Day 4

Individual post test of twenty sight words

Day 5

Individual checklist for reading behaviors

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, a sight word post test, a behavioral checklist and a student survey will be developed.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

The objective of this project was to increase reading skills through sight word recognition. The implementation of hand-on activities was selected to effect the desired changes.

Hands-on activities were used to teach sight word recognition. The sight words were taught in one on one settings and small groups. In Site A, the activities were started during the second week of November and concluded the second week of December. In Site B, the activities were started during the first week of school in August and concluded during the second week of October. The first week involves a student survey to discover student feelings about reading, a pretest of targeted sight words, and an individual checklist for reading behaviors. The following schedule applies to weeks two through six. Day one of each week involved introducing the list of targeted sight words for the week. The students would then trace the word on a pre-made card. Glue was put on the card in the shape of the word and covered with glitter. The teacher said the word aloud for the student, and they repeated the word as they traced the glitter with their finger. In the original plans, day two called for an activity where beans were glued on cards in the shape of words. Two weeks into the intervention, this was changed to an activity where students trace the words in a cookie sheet filled with sand. The change was made because the activity was too difficult and time consuming for the students in our groups. Site A only used the sand activity because the plan was changed before the implementation started at that site. Day three was an activity where students would use magnetic letters on a cookie sheet to reproduce a word card that showed one of the weekly targeted sight words. Day four gave the students practice finding the targeted word in a short passage. The passage was a short story written on chart paper. The

students helped the teacher find the words and circle them on the chart paper. Day five includes a flash card activity. The students try to identify the week's targeted words as the teacher presents them. After week two, the prior week's targeted words are also included in the flashcard activity. Week seven involves reading teacher created predictable reading books. The book for day one will use the words from list A. The day two book will use words from list B. The day three book will use words from list c. The book for day four will use the words from list D, and the day five book will use the words from list E. During week eight, students read their favorite book from week seven with a partner then to the class. Students were given a posttest of twenty sight words. A post survey to record feelings about reading was given as well as a reading behavior post checklist.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of hands on activities, a pre and posttest of targeted sight words was administered. These data were aggregated by pre and posttest results for each site in Table 2.

Table 2

Word Identification by Students in Targeted Groups at Site A and Site B

Word in Isolation	Site A Pretest	Site A Posttest	Site B Pretest	Site B Posttest
a	3	4	7	10
and	1	3	0	6
big	2	5	1	6
can	2	5	0	5
for	2	3	0	1
go	3	5	2	7
I	3	4	7	9
in	0	2	1	5
is	0	2	2	4
it	0	2	0	2

Word in Isolation	Site A Pretest	Site A Posttest	Site B Pretest	Site B Posttest
jump	1	4	0	8
look	4	5	0	4
me	3	5	1	4
play	0	3	0	5
run	2	4	0	4
see	2	5	0	3
the	2	3	1	7
we	1	3	0	2
you	2	4	0	5
my	0	2	0	0

The intervention appears to have had a positive effect on student word recognition. The targeted students at Site were able to identify 33 percent of the words on the pretest and 73 percent on the posttest. The targeted students at Site B were able to identify 10 percent of the words on the pretest and 48.5 percent on the posttest. The data from Site A shows a higher rate of increase. This may be the result of student age and prior experience with early literacy activities.

A pre and post survey was given to record student feelings about reading scenarios. The students were asked how to choose a happy, neutral, or sad face to describe the following situations:

- This is how I feel about books.
- This is how I feel about the library.
- This is how I feel when someone reads to me.
- This is how I feel when I read with a friend.

Overall, students at site A felt happy about reading in the first survey with the exception of the library statement. The post survey showed an increase in the number of smiley faces the students chose. At site B, the students had a range of faces selected, but in the post survey the number of happy faces increased.

The researchers completed a pre and post behavioral checklist. The researchers observed the students in an emergent reading situation and recorded the following behaviors as Always, Sometimes, or Never exhibiting the behavior:

- Does the child hold the book correctly?
- Does the child look at the picture to make predictions about the text?

- Does the child "read" the book from front to back?
- Does the child recognize high frequency words in context?
- Does the child track print from left to right?

The researchers discovered that all of the students demonstrated the appropriate reading behaviors more frequently.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on sight word recognition and reading behaviors, the students' showed a marked improvement in reading skills. The students identified more high frequency words. The students' feelings about reading scenarios improved, and the students' demonstrated more appropriate emergent and early reading behaviors. The hands on nature of the activities may have positively affected the outcome.

The students' were successful in reading the words in isolation. However, they were not as successful in reading the words in context. This was not an area of focus in our study, but would be a future consideration for teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Behavioral Checklist
Reading Survey
Pre and Posttest

Behavioral Checklist	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Does the child hold the book correctly?			
2. Does the child look at the picture to make predictions about the text?			
3. Does the child "read" the book from front to back?			
4. Does the child recognize high frequency words in context?			
5. Does the child recognize punctuation?			

Notes:

Name_____ Date_____

Word in Isolation	Pretest	Postest
a		
and		
big		
can		
for		
go		
I		
in		
it		
jump		
look		
me		
my		
play		
run		
see		
the		
we		
you		
is		

Name _____ Date _____

This is how I feel about books:

This is how I feel about TV:

This is how I feel about the library:

This is how I feel when someone reads to me:

This is how I feel when I read with a friend:

Name_____Date_____

Appendix B

Word Lists

Word List A:

a
and
big
can
for

Word List B:

go
I
in
is
it

Word List C:

jump
look
me
play
run

Word List D:

see
the
we
you
my

Appendix C

Sight Word Books

An "I Can Read" Story

A Big Dog – A Little Cat

1

A cat.

2

A dog.

3

A dog and a cat.

4.

Look! A little cat.

5.

Look! A big dog.

6

Look, a little cat and a big dog.

The End

Talk About Questions:

1. Which animal was little?
2. Which animal was big?
3. Which animal did you like the best?

Cut apart the small book found on pages 12 and 13. Color the pictures and staple together. Read the book to a friend

An "I Can Read" Story

I See

1

I see you.

2

I see you and me.

3

I see a big cat.

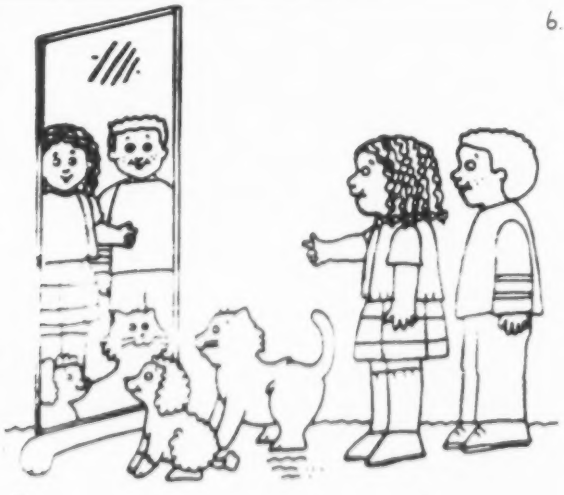
4.

I see a little dog.

5.

I am little.
The dog is little.
The cat is big.

6.



I see you and me
and the little dog
and the big cat.

The End

Talk About Questions:

1. Where was the boy hiding?
2. Where did the animals come from?
3. Which animal was big?
4. Which animal was little?

Cut apart the small book found on pages 22 and 23. Color the pictures and staple together. Read the book to a friend.

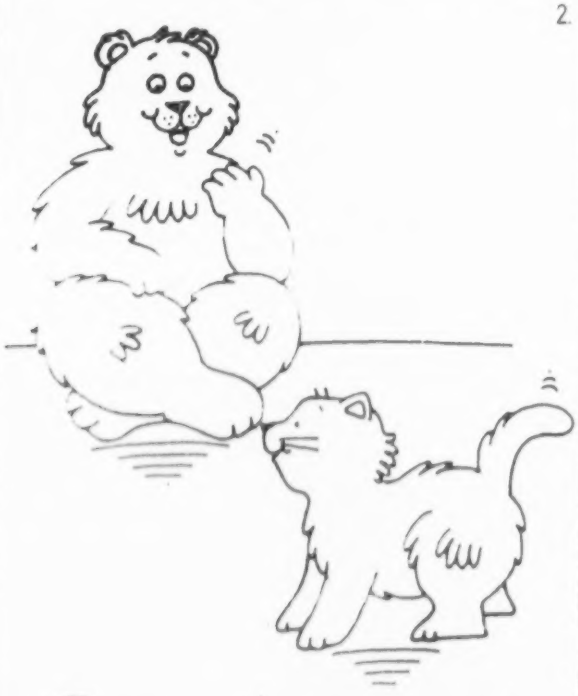
An 'I Can Read' Story

I Like My Cat

1

Look at my cat!

2



Come here cat.

3

It is a little cat.

It is my cat

4.

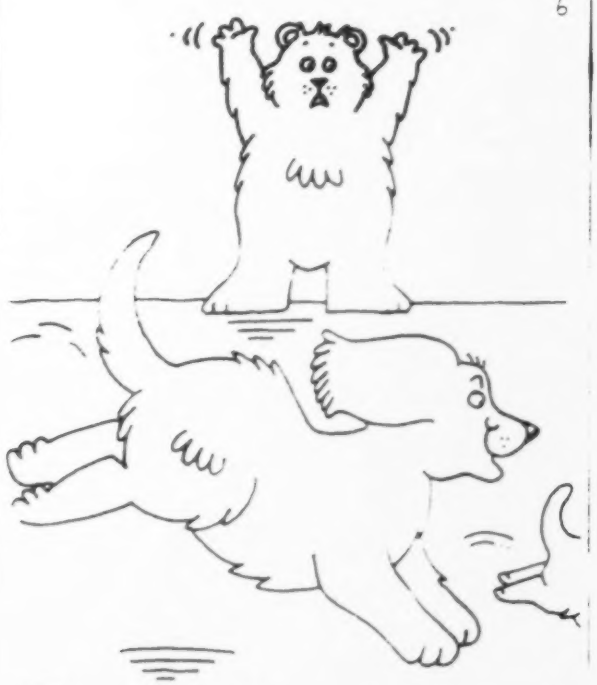
I like my cat.

5.

Look little cat!

A big dog!

6



Run, little cat, run!

The End

Talk About Questions:

1. Who had a pet cat?
2. Why was the cat scared?
3. Who was coming after the cat?
4. What did the bear say?

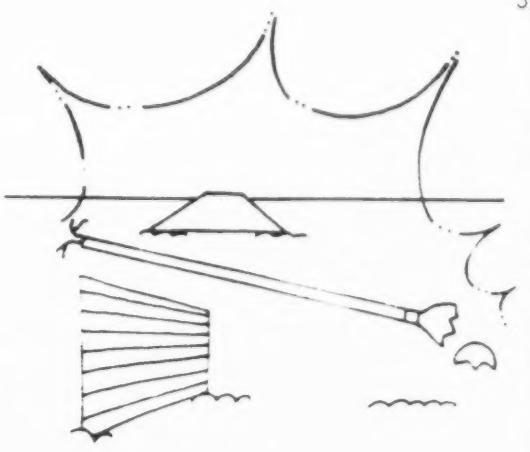
Cut apart the small book found on pages 42 and 43. Color the pictures and staple together. Read the book to a friend.

An "I Can Read" Story

My House

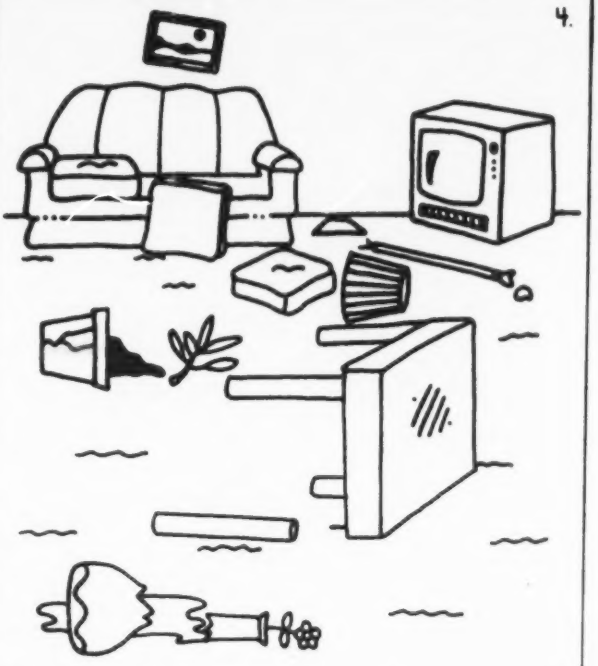
I am in my house.

I run and jump in
my house!



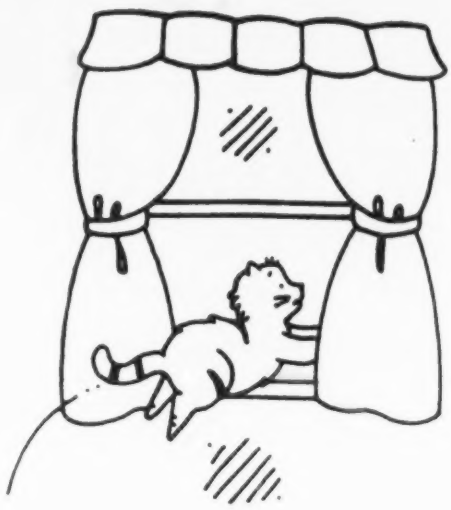
Help!
The cat did it!
Look at the cat!

4.



Look at the house!

5.



The cat will run away!

6

The cat was here!

The cat did it!

The End

Talk About Questions:

1. Who made the mess in the house?
2. What are some of the things that were broken?
3. Do you think that the mom believes that the cat made all the mess?